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Diggs Backing Strong As He Gets Ready to Run for Reelection

From News Services

DETROIT—While his Republican opponent called for his resignation, many constituents of Rep. Charles Diggs Jr. (D-Mich.) are standing by him and calling for his reelection next month, despite Diggs' conviction Saturday in a payroll kickback scheme.

"I'm going to use (the conviction) as an issue," said Dovie T. Pickett, 56, the GOP chairwoman in the 13th Congressional District and Diggs' opponent in the Nov. 7 general election.

"I was careful not to give my opinion as to his guilt or innocence during the trial," Pickett said, but now she says, "I think he should resign."

"I am still a candidate and expect to be reelected," Diggs said after he was found guilty in Washington on Saturday of 29 counts of mail fraud and illegally diverting more than \$60,000 in congressional salaries to pay his personal and congressional bills.

Diggs has scheduled a news conference at the Detroit Press Club today to announce his plans for the remainder of the 95th Congress, which is scheduled to adjourn Saturday.

Joan Willoughby, Diggs' press secretary, said Diggs will not resign as chairman of the House District Committee, although he could be stripped of that post, as well as the chairmanship of the House International Relations subcommittee on Africa, by his fellow Democrats in the House.

"I will present myself (to the House) in January just as I have presented myself in the past," said Diggs, 55, the senior black member of the House, who is seeking his 13th consecutive two-year term in Congress.

The Rev. Charles Adams, pastor of the Hartford Avenue Baptist Church here where Diggs is a trustee, said Sunday that the congressman "will be a trustee of this church as long as he wants to be, and as long as the congregation wants him to be. And they do."